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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, NSC FOR RAMCHAND, LONDON FOR TSOU,
PARIS FOR ZEYA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/21/2015
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KU](#) [SUCCESSION](#)
SUBJECT: SABAH FAMILY MEMBER SAYS MEETINGS TONIGHT "PIVOTAL"

REF: KUWAIT 208 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: DCM Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Kuwaiti Ambassador to the U.S. Shaykh Salem Abdullah Al-Sabah called the Ambassador the evening of January 23 on a visa matter, but engaged in discussion of the topic of the hour--ongoing Sabah family infighting over succession. (Shaykh Salem is currently in Kuwait and presumably is attending the family meetings at which the issue is being discussed.) He said the family will be meeting that night, with emissaries from the two factions shuttling between the groups to bring about a resolution. The meetings tonight will be "pivotal".

12. (C) Shaykh Salem was cautiously optimistic that a solution would be reached. He claimed that 90 percent of the family members were with Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah. All the family members hoped to resolve the dispute internally because nobody wanted to have the question of succession decided by the National Assembly.

13. (C) He commented that it was not practical to have a "symbolic" Amir (i.e. Shaykh Saad as a figurehead unable to function for health reasons). Asked about the reaction of neighboring states, Shaykh Salem said they were "concerned but not worried". Their concerns were rooted in what Sabah family infighting said about the image of the region and the symbol of family unity.

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